

File: Pasco Sanitary Landfill

Chemical waste banned

By JIM DULLENTY
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The Department of Ecology today banned chemical waste dumping and imposed other restrictions on the Pasco landfill, which has been operating without a state discharge permit.

Larry Peterson, with the DOE in Spokane, said the landfill operator, Larry Dietrich, would be notified by letter of the ban and other restrictions.

They result from a meeting last week attended by Peterson, Dietrich, Larry Camber, Benton and Franklin counties health officer, and Claude Sappington, DOE environmental supervisor.

No action will be taken against Dietrich for not having the state permit, because the state agency was not sure until recently that Dietrich's dump came within its juris-

diction, Peterson said.

He said Dietrich applied for the permit last Dec. 4 and the application is being processed. Dietrich also applied for a hazardous waste discharge permit and then withdrew his application, Peterson said.

Bob Boothe, Franklin County planner, said Dietrich was issued a conditional-use permit by the county in 1977, good for five years. It will be reviewed before it expires in April 1982, he said.

Peterson said 5,000 gallons of raw sewage is being dumped daily into the landfill's lagoons. Another 5,000 gallons of slightly treated sewage also is being dumped daily.

But Peterson said the volume is not as great as he first feared. He said trucking firms which haul the wastes from Hanford construction sites say they are running half empty.

DOE is taking the truckers' word for it, since the state agency has no other way to check the volume, he said.

Under the ban, sludges from chemical fertilizer and pesticide tank trucks can no longer be dumped in the Pasco landfill. Trucks now will have to haul such wastes to a hazardous waste dump at Arlington, Ore.

Peterson said the ban is to remain in effect at least until studies are completed of the groundwater surrounding the landfill northeast of Pasco.

Dietrich has agreed to hire an engineering firm by April 1 to study whether the groundwater surrounding the landfill has been polluted, Peterson said.

The landfill operator also must conduct studies to see if his sewage lagoons are percolating waste into

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the groundwater and if the lagoons are treating the waste properly.

The studies are also to determine what modifications, if any, are needed to assure the lagoons do not pollute the groundwater.

Dietrich has been given until July 1 to complete the studies, Peterson said.

In the interim, Dietrich agreed to notify all haulers in writing that he will accept only three types of wastes:

- ★ From domestic septic tanks.
- ★ From holding tanks at Washington Public Power Supply System construction projects, which contain sewage.
- ★ From chemical toilets at the WPPSS projects.

Commercial wastes and tank pumpings cannot be mixed in with the other wastes and must be dumped separately at the landfill.

These wastes include sludge from garages, truck washing places, industrial plants and others. These in the past have been picked up by septic tank pumpers and dumped into the sewage lagoons.

To accept any but the three wastes permitted, Dietrich must receive permission on a case-by-case basis from the DOE, Peterson said.

In addition, he must maintain a record of each vehicle entering his site; list the type, volume and source of the waste. In the past, the only records kept were for billing purposes and were not adequate, Peterson said.

The hydrologic studies will lead to a permanent system of monitoring groundwater around the dump, he said.

Peterson said the Spokane office has a large area to cover and "we have not aggressively pursued" the

problems at the Pasco dump.

"We did not leap on someone to defend the environment," Peterson said. "We haven't taken a hard-nosed approach about it."

He said as long as Dietrich accepted only septic tank pumpings, the landfill was under the jurisdiction of the county health department. It was when he began accepting sewage from Hanford construction projects two years ago that he came under DOE regulations.

The agency in the past believed the volume was not great enough to worry about, but it has grown to the point where the state must impose restrictions, Peterson said.

WPPSS officials said their new sewage lagoon should be completed in three to four months and the Pasco dump will no longer have to take sewage from WPPSS construction projects.